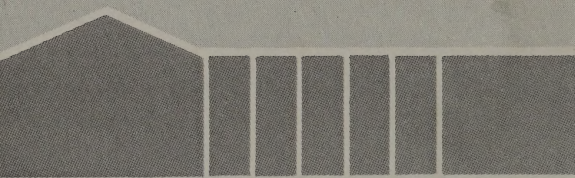


**Practical Views of
Sanctification**

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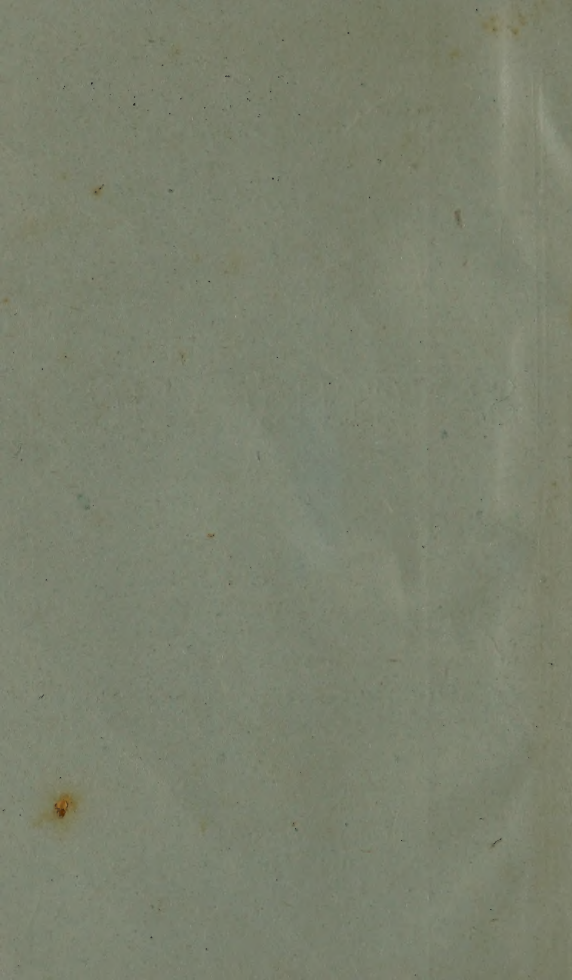
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Robert Brown

PRACTICAL VIEWS
OF
SANCTIFICATION

BY
WILLIAM NICHOLSON, M. D.

NICHOLSON & BROTHER,
RICHMOND, INDIANA.



THE PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

Dr Nicholson's papers as they have appeared in the *Friends' Review* and the *Christian Worker* have called forth so many voluntary expressions of approval and endorsement, that we have thought it well to publish an edition in tract form.

The following is taken from the *Christian Worker*, the last number issued by Daniel Hill, as editor:

"We give this week No. 3 of Dr. Nicholson's able papers on 'Sanctification,' and points intimately connected therewith. We have received Nos. 4 and 5, but have to turn them over, with quite an amount of other matter, to the care of our successor, C. W. Pritchard."

"A part, or all, of these papers by Dr. Nicholson, we learn, will be published in tract form, and may be had, we presume, of the author at Lawrence, Kansas, or of Timothy Nicholson, Richmond, Indiana. Some of our readers may not agree with Dr. Nicholson's method of treating these subjects, but to our mind they seem to be largely in accord with Christian experience, and the teaching of the Bible. It may be found easier to dissent from the doctor's positions than to disprove them."

The following are extracts from a few of the private letters we have received, which have incidentally referred to these papers. The writers are all earnest and efficient Workers in the Lord's Vineyard, two of them Ministers of the Gospel, and another, one of the ablest doctrinal writers in the Society of Friends:

"I have no doubt the Dr. is a wholly devoted and sanctified man; and his views from the side of practical experience are of great value. I hope all of us who read them will accept them as such, and try to derive from them all the good they are designed to effect."

"Dr. Nicholson's articles contain strong meat; and I think it will be difficult to controvert his positions."

"I have been greatly pleased with thy brother's articles in the *Friends' Review*."

"If I were acquainted with thy brother as I am with thee, I would send him congratulations on the last issue of the *Worker*, * * * One sentence of his last paper should be framed and hung up in every revival meeting we are to have in the future," viz: "Let the necessity of Sanctification, be inseparably connected with the privilege of justification in the regeneration of souls."

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THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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In preparing the articles recently printed in the *Worker*, I endeavored to say as definitely as I could just that which, as it seemed to me, the church needed to hear, and to which I thought it would at this time lend an ear. What I have written must necessarily be imperfect, both in its scope and in its execution. These imperfections, I commit to the mercy and overruling of God, and to the charity of my brethren. And if there be any to whom my articles shall prove a heavy burden they will have an opportunity of testing the *appropriateness* or *inappropriateness* of the exhortation which at some time or other they have given to their exercised brethren "to let the Lord take care of his own work."

WM. NICHOLSON.

LAWRENCE, KAN.

BY DR. WM. NICHOLSON.

SANCTIFICATION

1883:

ITS CONNECTION WITH JUSTIFICATION.

THE great difficulty in the way of salvation is for the soul to submit itself to the influences, control and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Whenever it does submit itself thereto without reservation, it is regenerated—born again—born of the Spirit—made a new creature in Christ Jesus and is, of course, in a state of sanctification. It is baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, becoming a member of his body, which is the true church. In this baptism into Christ by the Holy Ghost its sins are remitted, forgiven, pardoned, blotted out, through faith in his blood. The soul is justified. It experiences reconciliation and peace with God. It is clothed with sonship and becomes an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ.

The new man, with new affections, new desires, new hopes, new motives, new purposes and new plans, must now go on to live the new life which has just begun. And the great difficulty will continue to be the maintaining of a constant submission

of the soul to the influences, control and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Conversion implies a real change from a state of sin to a state of righteousness. Sanctification is unquestionably experienced in regeneration, for that which is born of the Spirit must be holy. Hence sanctification and justification are necessarily connected in regeneration, which is the beginning of Christian life.

But life means growth and growth means development. The holy affections implanted in the soul at regeneration at once give it a new character. They immediately begin to exert their influence, and in a true Christian life this goes on until the new character is developed, rounded out, established, made strong and full of fruit, the fruit of the Spirit—"love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance or self control." (R. V.)

But the very life of this new Christian life from its beginning is the divine Spirit, the Holy Ghost. Men are never afar off

from God, except in their nature and disposition. He is not far from any one, says the apostle, for in him all men live and move and have their being. His omnipresence places him in immediate relationship with every soul and whosoever properly responds by a true and complete repentance to the convictions of the Holy Spirit for sin, witnesses also by the same Spirit a saving application of the great truths of the incarnation, atonement, meditation and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He who condemned for sin now assumes the office of comforter, teacher and guide. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them to the heart that is open to receive. Yea, Christ manifests himself in the Spirit, for he not only promised the comforter, but he identifies himself with the comforter. "I will not leave you comfortless, or desolate, or orphans. I come unto you." And so long as the heart continues to submit itself unto him, he never ceases his work. Its calling and

election are made sure by continuing in the obedience of faith, deliberately choosing the right when it would be equally possible to choose the wrong, deliberately doing the right when powerful motives are presented for doing the wrong.

It is sanctification in the beginning and sanctification all the way; and therein the child of God grows continually according to the will of him who ministers faith and knowledge and grace.

ITS RELATION TO ORDINARY RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

In the foregoing I have endeavored to establish the following propositions.

1 The great difficulty before conversion is for the soul to submit itself to the influences, control and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the great difficulty after conversion is to maintain this submission constantly.

2 Unreserved submission to the influences, control, and guidance of the Holy Spirit, secures for the soul regeneration or the new birth.

3 That which is born of the Spirit must be holy, and therefore sanctification is experienced in regeneration.

4 In a true Christian life in which there is a continuous submission to the influences, control, and guidance of the Holy Spirit, God never ceases his work, and in such a life sanctification is experienced in the beginning and all the way, and the child of God grows therein continually according to the will of him who ministers faith and knowledge and grace.

Probably all Christians will admit that these propositions are correct. Probably none will deny that the soul is made pure and holy in the new birth, and that it *ought not* to sin again, and that therefore its sanctification may be and ought to be maintained continuously. This high standard is uniformly set before us in the Holy Scriptures, "Be ye holy for I am holy." "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect," etc. But the terms "sanctifica-

tion," "holiness," and "perfection," as *applied to men*, are not absolute in their meaning. They then have relation to a created, and therefore an inferior, being. Man can never attain equality with his Creator. His capacities and utmost attainments or bestowments must always remain infinitely below the inapproachable and inconceivable fulness (completeness, absoluteness) of God. But he is nevertheless called upon to be like unto God, and the very essence of his holiness is an earnest desire and persistent effort, through the help of Christ, to attain to this likeness. Human perfection consists in a constant aim and earnest endeavor, through divine assistance, to be perfect. The experience of a finite being can not go beyond this and the results of it. Here is the boundary which we can never cross, because it expands with our growth and keeps its pace in advance of all our progress. It is this transformation of man's will which gives a new character to the soul. This is the substance of the new

birth, and from this is evolved, under the influences, control, and guidance of the Holy Spirit, all the graces, developments and holy activities of the Christian life.

Herein is no doctrine of mere legality. It is not striving to do a thing, and at the same time discarding the only means by which it can be done. It is not striving to be perfect without God. The salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ in all its steps, processes and developments, is by faith. It is of faith that it may be by grace, and it is this faith which joins our working with his and makes the two one. It is no longer we that do it, but Christ who takes hold of our feeble and inefficient effort and gives it force and right direction and effectiveness. The exercise of true faith is a constant effort to reach towards Christ. This is our part, and to this Christ responds by reaching not only towards but unto us, and lifting us into power and dominion over sin. This is the process in the beginning, and it never ceases to be the only way. It is a life of faith both for

the babe and for the strong man, and this life of faith is as truly a life of sanctification and holiness and perfection in the one as in the other. Whatsoever there may be of wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption in either, is all of Christ. Every increase and further attainment or bestowment has not been simply for our ease and enjoyment, but for his service and the glory of his name. And for every progression which we may have experienced there must still be a depth and an intensiveness to which we have not attained, and even "entire" sanctification must at once lose its entirety if we fail to press on as our capacities are increased and our opportunities extended.

But, as stated in proposition 1, there is a great difficulty about it. The renewed soul in its childhood state has not learned to use its own very limited powers. It has come into new relations with God and with Satan and all the powers of evil. It now inquires the will of God and submits

itself thereto instead of gratifying the desires of the flesh. This necessarily brings it into active warfare with Satan. The weapons of this warfare, though complete, are new to it. It must learn by actual use to make them effective. No wonder if it experiences some reverses. It may be severely wounded. But so long as the earnest desire and effort to please God is maintained, it does not suffer a full defeat. Humbled under a constant sense of its own weakness and inexperience, it looks in penitence and faith to the Great Captain of its salvation and with renewed strength and perfect healing it rallies again. Its powers of endurance and of active resistance against evil constantly increase and with every fresh victory its enemies become weaker.

But the experience of the renewed soul may be, and it often is, different. It may fail to take unto itself the whole armor of God and to keep guard, and thus it becomes the victim of an unexpected assault. Or it may begin to parley with the enemy

and thus be carried away into captivity. Its sanctification suffers an eclipse because it has sinned again. Its justification becomes obscured because it has again come under condemnation. But if it immediately humbles itself in true repentance, its most merciful Savior renews a right spirit within it. He delivers it again and restores its previous relationship. Sanctification and justification have been interrupted, but not fatally. Peter denied his Lord. He fell into the hands of the enemy. His sin seems to us to be a grievous one, but it was not fatal, because as his gracious and compassionate Savior turned and looked upon him, his heart melted. He wept bitterly. His sin was forgiven and his soul cleansed. Well might he declare with confidence that "God had exalted Jesus to be a Prince and a Savior for to give repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins."

How often the soul may thus slide or fall and be quickly restored, no man may say. If our brother sins against us seven

times in a day and seven times in a day turns again to us and says that he repents, we are required to forgive him. When Peter inquired if a man should forgive a sinning and repenting brother seven times his Master must have surprised him by extending it, to seventy times seven; and as this latter number will never be reached in any one's experience, it would really seem that the Master meant that we must forgive our brother as often as he repents. And surely God's mercy must exceed that which he requires of us. It is not his will that we should *sin*. It is his will that we should *not sin*. "Yet if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins, if we truly repent when he brings our sin to our consciousness.

But there are other cases in which the soul that has been renewed, falls into sin and does not penitently respond to the convictions of the Spirit of Christ therefor. On the contrary, it cleaves to its sin

and proves rebellious. Excuses for disobedience are framed. In some way or other it contrives to enter a plea of justification. It claims a sufficient reason for keeping back the best of the sheep and the oxen. The only safety for such a soul is to repent quickly and thoroughly. If it does not, it becomes careless and indifferent and hardened. It will add sin to sin, and after a time become so completely backslidden as to be practically in the same condition as before conversion. Persistent rebellion and stubbornness will work a total lapse of regeneration, sanctification, and justification, and then the fact that the soul had once been converted will be nothing in its favor, but may even add to its condemnation. But as nothing is impossible with God, so his voice may re-awaken even such a soul. So long as his Spirit strives with it, there is opportunity for repentance and the dead may be raised to life again as at the first, but such a soul far too often persists in its choice of evil till it closes the door of mercy against itself.

THE PROGRESS OF THE SOUL IN IT AFTER
CONVERSION.

The development of the Christian life varies in different individuals, and also in the same individual at different periods. There is progress, but not mathematical progression. Steadfastness of purpose and implicitness of soul surrender after conversion are, in many cases, much affected, at least temporarily, by temperament, by special inherited tendencies, and by uncontrollable circumstances. The work of God's grace is often greatly promoted by the work of his providence. He sometimes transplants from one soil to another more favorable as when he changes the surroundings of men and thus removes hindrances and brings influence which propel and impel towards that which is good instead of those which degrade and enslave. Sometimes he sends the steady current of healthy nervous influence where before there was excessive and perverted irritability. Sometimes he lifts from the soul a cloud of gloom and despondency, by

restoring suspended physical action, or correcting that which was morbid.

On the other hand, the divine working is often hindered by an improper exercise of that limited free agency with which men are endowed. Converted men are not always sufficiently impressed with the fact that "evil companionships corrupt good morals," I Cor. xv: 33 (R. V. Am. Com.) and so they needlessly place themselves under circumstances very unfavorable to purity of soul. If they succeed in maintaining their integrity, yet they do not witness such progress as might otherwise come to them. It was testified of Lot that he was a righteous man though in the midst of Sodom. But the vexing of his soul by the wickedness of that city does not commend his choice of it as a place of residence, to say nothing of the dreadful results upon his family.

Again, progress depends very much upon earnestness of purpose and steady concern of mind to be faithful to the requirements of the divine will. Obedience is the *test*

of faith, as to its sincerity. Obedience is also the *measure* of faith; and more than this, obedience has the promise of *greater faith* for the future; for faith grows by proving God's faithfulness. Our trust in him increases as we keep his commandments, and witness an unfailing fulfillment of all the promises which he connects with obedience.

Yet over all God's providences and the revealed conditions of his grace, there stands his absolute sovereignty. He ministers faith and knowledge and grace according to his own will. Our part is diligently to seek, humbly to receive and faithfully to occupy. He giveth the increase. He reaches towards some much more than towards others, not because his ways are unequal, but because he has a special purpose and work for some that he has not for others, and therefore he prepares them for it and through them as chosen and prepared instruments, he communicates his blessing to the many who come under their influence. Thus

his seeming partiality towards Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, the twelve apostles, Paul, and the children of Israel was really out of a great purpose, and plan of love and beneficence to the whole human family. No man is anything however exalted above his fellows. God is supreme. "Promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South. But God is the judge. He putteth down one and setteth up another." Ps. lxxv: 6,7. In God's own will and keeping, there are set times to favor not only Zion, (Ps cii: 11 to 13) but also his individual saints; and as the soul waits for these and thankfully accepts them, a wonderfully rapid development often occurs for a season; as the growth of a tree in spring exceeds that of all the other seasons combined. These special times serve to mark different stages of Christian experience and each succeeding stage shows a more thorough establishment of Christian character and a more satisfactory exhibition of it in the life and conduct. There is more

of godliness and less of human infirmity apparent. The soul seems lifted upon a higher plain of experience.

But with all this increase of spiritual knowledge, power and privilege, the conditions of spiritual life remain the same. Watchfulness and prayer, and a constant submission of the soul to the influences, control and guidance of the Holy Spirit, are no less necessary than at the first. The possibility and the danger of falling into sin still remain, and however much the clearness and the scope of spiritual vision may have been increased, it has a horizon still, beyond which it can not pierce except as it moves forward.

The day of Pentecost following our Savior's crucifixion affords a most remarkable example of set time of spiritual favor and special blessing upon the apostles, and through them upon the whole world. A great promise had been made to them, but both the promise and the time of it were in the Lord's keeping. The disciples waited for it in prayer and in faith, and in

willingness to receive. And when it came, great results were wrought both in them and by them. Their spiritual strength was greatly increased. Their purpose to follow Christ, became settled and steadfast. Their knowledge of the nature of his kingdom and of their own work in advancing it, acquired both extension and distinctness. And from that day to this, their experience has been a type of the visitations of God's grace to his waiting children. Every one of these, in every age, has his Pentecostal seasons, repeated in the will of God as the soul rests in patience, expectation and faith.

But Pentecost as a type must not go beyond Pentecost as a fact. In all its grandness and power, it was not a completion of the divine work in the apostles and by them. What they then experienced by no means sufficed for their whole future lives and work. The Divine Record does not say that before this time the carnal mind was dwelling in them and that at this time it was destroyed at a stroke, and all incli-

nation to sin suddenly and forever removed, and a thorough equipment received both of knowledge and of power, for every service to which they should thereafter be called; neither is it written of them, that after Pentecost they lived a life of sinless perfection. That the apostles had but *one* Pentecost may not be untrue *in words*, but it conveys the truth more truly to say that they had *many times* of special blessing. For it was the Holy Ghost who made Pentecost what it was. What he did for them on that day did not invalidate what he had done for them before, neither did it render unnecessary his further blessing and continual aid. Without him there is no completed salvation even for those who hear the message of the gospel; for he is the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he executes the work for each individual from beginning to end. He not only ministers the highest degrees of saintly experience and qualification, but he strives with a world that lieth in wickedness that it may receive Christ

and his salvation. The Holy Ghost of Pentecost is the same who convicts the world of sin, comforts those who believe and offers himself as their ever-present and indwelling teacher and guide. Even the fulness of Pentecost left room for fresh instructions to the apostles, as to the details of this new dispensation of God's grace to men through Jesus Christ. This further knowledge was left for future seasons of revelation. Neither is there any evidence that the ordinary conditions of spiritual life were abrogated by their Pentecostal experience. They still had need to watch and to pray and submit themselves constantly to the influences, control and guidance of the Spirit; and when they failed in these duties, the entireness of their sanctification did not exempt them from sin.

It is not necessary to say that Peter ever denied his Lord after Pentecost. But the Divine Record either makes him and Barnabas guilty of dissimulation or else it makes Paul an unjust accuser of

his brethren. Peter's denial of his Lord no more proves that he had never been sanctified before Pentecost than his dissimulation at Antioch proves that he was not sanctified after Pentecost. If we say that the latter offense was trivial in comparison with the former, is it not because we forget that much is required where much is given and that offenses against the law of God by those who have been pre-eminently blessed, must outweigh what seem to be grosser violations committed in the period of childhood and inexperience? Might not the temptation at Antioch coming to a strong and mature Christian, have been far more easily resisted than the terrible trial in the palace of the high priest, which shook the faith of *all* the disciples, to whom opportunity had not yet been given for the full development of all the fruits of the Christian life?

And if Peter's offense at Antioch was not a grave one, why was it so sternly and openly rebuked, whilst his denial of his

Lord did not call from the latter any word of reproof—only the look which melted his heart? Or if we say that Paul was too severe when he withstood Peter to the face, do we not make Paul a grave offender, especially as he justified his action in his letter to the Galatians and declared that Peter deserved to be blamed because he did not walk uprightly according to the truth of the gospel? And was not Paul an apostle? And though he was not at Pentecost, was he not baptized with the Holy Ghost as well as the others?

So the record of sin after Pentecost demonstrates that holiness in men is not self-existent, but that it must be maintained by a constant observance of the elementary conditions of spiritual life. As with the disciple, so also with the apostle, every sin must at least partially eclipse sanctification and obscure justification until God turns the soul again and causes his face to shine upon it.—Ps. lxxx: 3 7-19. The way of making our calling and election sure is one and the same whether for

the newly converted soul or for him who claims entire sanctification, and it is a sufficient proof that we have not outgrown the need of the Lord's prayer, if we imagine that we have done so. "Forgive us our sins" of ignorance, carelessness and presumption, can hardly ever be amiss whilst we are in the body.

Lawrence, Kansas.

SANCTIFICATION AND THE CRUCIFIXION
OF THE CARNAL MIND.

The remarkable experiences of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost greatly promoted their growth in grace, but the Holy Scriptures do not say that their sanctification began at that time, neither do they assert that it was completed at that time. The Divine Record does not say that they never had any movements or inclinations to sin afterward. Indeed, it is inconceivable that a man should ever sin without an inclination to sin. A tree cannot fall until it inclines from the perpendicular. It may incline without falling, but it cannot fall without inclining. Thence actual sin is a proof of previous inclination to sin. This inclination is not necessarily habitual. It may only be developed by temptation. The capacity of development is called susceptibility. No one denies that this susceptibility to sin remains even in those who claim a total destruction of the carnal nature in a Pentecostal experience.

Now, susceptibility to sin makes it possible for sin to be developed when the proper exciting influence (as in any temptation) is brought to bear on the soul. Susceptibility is a latent responsiveness, and when that to which the soul is responsive is presented to the soul, this responsiveness no longer remains latent. It springs into life and activity. Thus it turns out that susceptibility to sin, *when called into action*, is identical with inclination or tendency to sin. Hence, even in those who have no *habitual* inclination to sin, temptation may develop an inclination which, for the time being, demands vigorous resistance, or else it will lead into actual transgression.

Sometimes, indeed, it is claimed that before the destruction of the carnal mind in a Pentecostal experience, temptations come from within, but afterward only from without. But, as a matter of fact, we cannot always discern with unerring accuracy the source of our temptations, whether from the world, the flesh or the

devil, or from all combined. And the duty of resistance, the manner of resistance, the means of resistance and the result of proper resistance are all precisely the same, whether temptation comes from within or from without. "My grace is sufficient for thee," covers every class and every form of temptation, and watchfulness and prayer are enjoined upon *all*, because *all* in every stage of Christian experience *need* to watch and to pray. God will not fail to do His part, but it is incumbent on us to do ours; and so surely as we do, He will provide a way of escape from the power of temptation, and cause the trying of our faith to work for us patience and experience and hope, so that we grow in grace and stature and strength. Hard things become easy, and bitter things sweet. But those who have reached this stage of progress should not look back and despise the day of small things, when their earnestness of purpose was possibly really greater than now that they are enjoying what they suppose to be the rest of faith.

If they allow their consciences to become blunted ; if they cease to cultivate a quick sensibility to the divine impressions and holy influences of God's Spirit ; if they fail to wait upon the Lord in great humility, and to respond with a ready obedience ; if they give themselves up to present enjoyment in a satisfied complacency at their own attainments, or at what God has done for them, they may be in greater danger than in earlier years, when active resistance against sin called forth their most vigorous use of every means of grace. For the rest of faith is first a rest of grace, into which every soul enters as soon as it truly believes in Christ, and then the rest of glory in heaven. In neither case is it a rest of indolence and mere enjoyment. The rest of grace is the ceasing from our own works of sin, and finding peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, in a life of obedience and trust ; and the rest of glory—the everlasting Sabbath-keeping in heaven—will not be listless self-satisfaction, but holy activity and loyal service.

The rest of grace is rest in the midst of probation; not necessarily a condition in which we have no trouble from sin, but one in which, whatever our trouble from it, we constantly and steadfastly overcome by prayer and faith and grace. The soul does not rest in itself, nor in its obedience, nor even in the change which God hath wrought in it. It rests in God—in His Omnipotence—His mercy, and love in Christ Jesus—His unchangeable faithfulness and grace. This rest is not the exclusive privilege of the mature Christian. It is entered into at conversion. “We who have believed do enter into rest.” Heb. iv, 3. It is only because of an evil heart of unbelief, leading to a life of disobedience, that men do not enter into this rest. When the heart is changed, the rest of faith opens before it as its precious present privilege. It is not reserved for some second experience, though in special seasons of Divine favor there is a more rapid pressing on—a quickening of progress.

The expressions, “the carnal mind,”

“the body of sin,” “the natural man,” etc., are only personifications of the condition of man under the fall. But we must remember that sin is not a personal being. It is a reality, but not a living, acting entity apart from the soul itself. These personifications serve to represent the desperate nature of man’s condition, and the exceeding difficulty of deliverance. The process of deliverance is also illustrated by personification. Sin is represented as suspended on a cross, as put to death, as cast out, etc., etc. Some of these illustrations are *apparently* contradictory. For instance—in one, sin is said to be crucified, and finally to be dead; in another, it is said to be cast out, and to be striving to re-enter. But the contradiction is only apparent, for death, in a scriptural sense, does not usually mean annihilation, but a condition in which there is a latent life, which may revive under favoring circumstances. The simple meaning of these personifications is, that through the means provided the soul may pass from a condi-

tion of sinfulness to a condition of holiness, and that there is both possibility and danger that it may return to the previous condition.

The primary meaning of crucifixion is the nailing to a cross for the purpose of death. Matthew, Mark and John evidently use it in this way. The crucifixion of our Savior was said to have taken place as soon as he was nailed to the cross. It was spoken of in the past tense. "And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments," etc. Mark, xv, 24. And in the next verse it is said, "And it was the third hour, and they crucified him." But his death did not occur till the ninth hour. Sometimes whole days elapsed before actual death from crucifixion. And this distinction must be carried into the scriptural illustration of the crucifixion of sin, or the carnal mind. Beyond all question, this crucifixion occurs at conversion; or, more exactly, there is no conversion until this crucifixion has occurred. It is an essential condition of discipleship.

“Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” Luke, xiv, 27. “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with the ~~affections~~ and lusts.” Gal., v, 24. When the carnal mind, or will, or nature, is nailed to the cross, its power is overcome. It is subjected. It does not become subject in the sense of loyalty, but crucifixion subjects it in its irreversible disloyalty, and puts it in the way of a slow but sure death ; and it is said to be dead when the *habitual inclination to sin* has been supplanted by the habitual inclination to obedience. But, as before stated, this death is not annihilation. It still possesses a slumbering vitality, which favoring circumstances may call into action. This dormant life is represented by the expression, “susceptibility to sin.” Susceptibility may be developed into inclination, and inclination into actual transgression. If, after conversion, the essential conditions of spiritual life are not maintained, the old nature re-asserts itself and comes

into dominion again. Therefore it is the duty of every Christian to see that the crucifixion of the flesh, with the affections and lusts, which occurred at his conversion, is made continuous. We are called upon not only to deny ourselves and to take up our cross, but to do it *daily*. Luke, ix, 23. And this very clearly indicates that death unto sin is not an instantaneous experience, once for all. There must be a self to deny, or there can be no self-denial. There must be a cross to bear, or we cannot take it up daily. There must be some danger to watch against, or we should not be exhorted with such emphasis and repetition to watch and to pray. But as the soul is faithful and obedient, its strength of purpose to serve God increases. It learns to use the weapons of its warfare with greater skill and effectiveness, and its enemies, being often overcome, resist less and less vigorously. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James, iv, 7. Thus victory becomes easier as the soul grows in grace. Ordinary temptations have less

and less power. Yet, even to old soldiers of the cross, severe conflicts often come. They are never safe but with girded armor and sentinels on duty. It may be, now and then, that some veteran is so far retired from service as that, for a short time before his departure, he is entirely removed from the field of conflict, but for the great body of Christians active service in resisting temptation and in pressing after good is the appointed means by which they fill up in their measure that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, and come into precious fellowship with Him. It is no more review or dress parade. It is not even a mock contest, or shadow battle. The enemies are real and determined, and they will conquer unless resisted according to the commands of our Leader. But when thus resisted the victory is often easy. Sometimes it is so easy and so complete that the soul may forget the source of its strength, and in the very gladness of triumph it may fall into ambush. Watchfulness and prayer cannot safely be dis-

pensed with even in the hour of victory. Our enemies may all seem discomfited and scattered ; yea, they may seem to be dead on the field of battle, till within our whole horizon not one stands up against us, yet, like the Philistines to David and Moab to Israel, they are always liable to come to life again and to trouble us when least we expect them. So self-denial, the daily cross, watchfulness and prayer must go with us to the very gates of heaven. Within those gates, but not outside of them, our perfection will be that of the angels. To what extent and in what directions angelic perfection exceeds that to which we can attain in this life, is not fully revealed. Its superiority is probably so great as to be incomprehensible, and therefore incommunicable. An exact knowledge of it is not essential to our present duty and service, but if that duty and service be well minded we shall be permitted to pass through the gates, and “ then we shall know even as we are known.”

IMPERFECT TEACHING CONCERNING IT
LEADS TO IMPERFECT FAITH; AND IM-
PERFECT FAITH LEADS TO IMPERFECT
EXPERIENCE.

It is often asserted that conversion is usually instantaneous. This is supposed to be proven almost to a demonstration by limiting the meaning of conversion to the act of turning, and by assuming that there must be an indivisible point of time in which that act occurs in every case. In truth, the term conversion includes both the act of turning, and the state or condition into which the soul is introduced by that act. But so far as the act of turning is concerned, it would probably be very near the truth to say that it is never instantaneous. In almost or quite every case, it occupies time that is perceptibly divisible into periods less or greater, whether moments, or hours, or days. No experience can be instantaneous, if we are conscious of any steps in it—of any successions of impulse and effort—of any action and reaction. There may be, and

there are, moments when every experience culminates. So there were moments when the apex was given to the Pyramid—there are moments when the last hammer-stroke for some finished mechanism sounds upon the anvil—there are moments when the last spike is driven in a railroad. And so in most cases, if not all, what men call instantaneous conversion and instantaneous sanctification are only culminations of successive and, it may be, protracted action and reaction between God and the soul, resulting in a yielding response of the soul to the gracious influences, visitations and invitations of Divine love, and followed by a co-working with Him. Many of these culminations occur in religious meetings, or the first public confession of them is made in such meetings, but usually the foundation has been laid, so far as human agency is concerned, through the labor of Christian parents, or at least by the influences and nurture of the Christian home. It is perhaps not too much to say that in Christian lands parental or

family influence has more to do with conversions than any other human means. Of course, the real Agent behind every means of grace, both in the foundation work and in the culmination, is the Holy Spirit. But the religious meeting, either in its silent solemnity or by its public gospel ministrations, often becomes the occasion and the means of a positive and permanent decision towards which the soul has already been both pressed and pressing for a longer or shorter period under many and various gracious influences both direct and indirect.

It is a great mistake for Christians who are not called to preach the gospel to suppose that their work is unimportant. No man's labor can be in vain who faithfully performs, as to the Lord, those duties which *lie next to him*, however humble or inconspicuous they may be. We often do our greatest work when least we know it. Many a mother who has prayed and labored to bring up her sons and daughters in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,

has done a greater work than a queen upon her throne. These prayers and labors have not only reacted upon herself and tended to make her own religious character stronger, but they have nurtured the Divine work in the hearts of her children, and through these children have reached their influence to generations following. It is not the greatness of our deeds or opportunities as men estimate greatness, but our faithful dedication and submission to God, which He blesses for us and for others. Truly, indeed, has it been said that "as the house of God rises slowly through the ages, every true Christian life, however humble, will be a living stone in some one of its many palaces." Whilst it lived it may have sounded no trumpet to notify the world of its work, and little notice may have been taken of it by its fellows, but its record was on high, and when God makes up His jewels it is found amongst them. If we have joined ourselves unto God and have been co-working with Him, our work will remain. It may be hidden—out of

sight—covered over with the work of those who succeed us, but it will be just where we wrought it and will serve to the end of time and through all eternity the great purpose of God. The men who laid the first part of the foundation of the Pyramid died and their work was overlaid, overbuilt, surrounded and piled upon ; but that work was as essential to the permanence and safety of the structure as that of those who finished it. Let the glad tidings of Christ's salvation be preached more and more, both in Christian lands and amongst the heathen ; but let us not forget that the undergirdings of Christian character in individuals, societies and nations, must come largely through the sacred influences of millions of Christian homes. The cultivation in all these homes of active piety, both in word and deed, by precept and example, would be the most hopeful evidence of a substantial revival, and the surest safeguard against the dangers which lie in wait for churches and for nations.

Neither should the church rest satisfied with its stated appointments for public worship; for when, under a sense of its duty to the world around it and of its own great need, it prepares itself to seek the Divine blessing in a special effort more or less protracted, the Lord is often pleased to give a favorable answer to the hopes and prayers and expectations of His people, so that not only are sinners convicted and converted, but the tender buds of promise who have been the subjects of Christian nurture, open into decided Christian life. As to how such meetings should be conducted, there should be no inflexible method except that always the Divine Will should be diligently and humbly sought and reverently regarded; for the Lord is the Leader of His people. Experience, however, has demonstrated that it greatly promotes the health of the church members, when, on these special occasions, as well as other times, the claims of practical righteousness are enforced and a high standard of Christian living held up, so

that they may be humbled under a sense of shortcomings, and in penitence and faith may seek a renewal of grace and a true reviving of spiritual strength, and thus be the better prepared to welcome new converts into the fold, and to extend to them that Christian care, help and encouragement which they may need. It is also of great moment that there should be brought to bear upon the unconverted the unalterable connection of endless sorrow with unrepented sin ; the great danger of delay ; the absolute necessity of a thorough yielding of the soul, without any reservation, to the will of God, by forsaking every known sin, taking up the daily cross, and following in the footsteps of Him who was holy, harmless and undefiled ; the infinite love of God in Christ Jesus, who came to seek and to save the lost ; the blessed provisions of His gospel for all who, in response to the convictions of His spirit for sin, will truly repent and believe, and who thus come to experience the new birth, the forgiveness of sins that are past, holiness

of heart and a capacity of growing in grace under the guidance and constantly stimulating influences of the in-dwelling Holy Ghost, who thus prepares the saints for that heaven of rest and glory which Christ hath prepared for them.

Furthermore, in these special meetings, as well as in all others, the way should be open and encouragement given for such expression by every one as *the Lord prompts*; for *such* expression is a test of the obedience of those who speak, and often opens the way for appropriate advice and encouragement. But great care should be taken to avoid dictation and urging to expression beyond the requirements of God, and great harm may be done by attempting to force the current of religious feeling of a whole congregation, sometimes in one direction and sometimes in another, at the will or instance of one man. A skilful manipulator who finds a pliant congregation may apparently achieve great success. He seems to be able to manufacture religious experience for hundreds and

for thousands, and the result is often heralded as a great revival. But when he has taken his departure for other fields, very many find that their experience was unreal, and that by a complete surrender of their individuality in spiritual matters to a fellow man, they have unwittingly taken a lesson in insincerity.

Greatly as we do often need the help of our fellow man, both spiritually and temporally, yet if such help in either case proves really helpful, it can only be because it is so administered as to promote our own individuality instead of destroying it. The soul needs to be instructed and trained in the right use of its own capacity and privilege of communing with God by direct and conscious intercourse, and to wait upon Him as the source of all its expectations of good. Ps. lxii: 5. Whenever its *primary* dependence is transferred to any human instrumentality, the limitations and imperfections of that instrumentality must necessarily repeat themselves in the soul's experience. How

important did the apostle deem it that the faith of his converts should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the illimitable power of God.

In this connection, very serious thoughts press themselves upon us. Do we not sometimes hear exhortations in such language as that the awakened and interested but not really repentant sinner may believe that it is his privilege to “look to the middle cross” and to receive the pardon of his sins—that there is no condition on his part but the simple acceptance of forgiveness? And if he protests that he feels no evidence of being forgiven, is he not sometimes told that he must believe it and confess it as a means of receiving the assurance of it? Is not too little said in most cases, of the necessity of real penitence, of such deep conviction and distress on account of sin as makes the soul willing to part with it—of such radical repentance as means a real change of mind, purpose and intention, a turning away from sin and a turning unto God—a thorough submission of soul to

•God's authority and government—a willingness to take the yoke of Christ and to learn of Him—an unreserved surrender of all to the Divine Will. If these conditions of pardon and peace are not sufficiently insisted upon by evangelists and other ministers, it must come to pass that such imperfect teaching shall lead to imperfect faith, and imperfect faith must lead to imperfect experience. And thus it turns out that multitudes claim conversion, and pardon and peace, in whom the scriptural conditions of these attainments have not been fulfilled. They claim to belong to Christ without having crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts, and their daily life is a standing contradiction of their professions. In many things they keep the Divine Law, and in all things they acknowledge its authority, but when obedience does not suit their convenience or interest or pleasure, they almost constantly violate that law. They can often point back with much assurance to the day, and perhaps to the hour, in which

they claim to have been converted. They tell us that they *know* they are saved because they were converted at such and such a time. But their *present* experience is very unsatisfactory. They are almost constantly under more or less of a sense of condemnation, not merely because of sin under sudden temptation, but because of an unyielding will which often deliberately chooses the wrong when it knows the right and feels that the right ought to be chosen. Sometimes in revival meetings or on occasions of religious interest, they have a renewal of their first experience, but it is still imperfect in its groundwork of an imperfect faith through imperfect teaching, and therefore it does not reach the inner life of the soul—it does not transform the mind and the will. But God is rich in mercy, and in many of these cases the work of humiliation goes on under the repeated invitation of Divine love, under the convicting influences of the Holy Spirit and under the severe but merciful chastenings and providential dealing and

discipline of our Heavenly Father, until a complete surrender of all is consciously made and a conformity to God's will is wrought, without any reservations. This is often called a second experience, when, in reality, it would seem to be only the first true one.

But we are sometimes told that our religious experience is as certain as the evidence of the outward senses—that no man may question it, etc. But the correctness of this position depends entirely upon whether the experience is in harmony with the revealed will of God or not. We cannot safely deduce God's will from human experience. We must require experience to conform to His revealed will. The conditions of sound spiritual experience are clearly laid down in the Holy Scriptures, and we have no right to deceive ourselves and then to claim infallibility. Protestants have always denied that a human priesthood is authorized to grant absolution of sins, and yet millions of consciences have been appeased by confessing to the

priest, and those who thus confess seem to have an unquestioning faith that their sins are forgiven. Because salvation is by faith, we must not fall into the error of supposing that any kind of faith secures it; otherwise the faith of the Protestant is no more effectual than the faith of the Catholic. It will not do to say that one kind of faith is as good as another. We would place no limit to the Divine compassion for all of us, on account of ignorance and misapprehension, for if God were not very pitiful and of tender mercy, none of us could have any hope. But, after all, the true test of a genuine faith in Christ is that it saves from sin—not only from the punishment due to past sins, but from the power and dominion of sin. It is a real redemption—a sure deliverance from bondage. The servant of sin really becomes the Lord's freeman. "Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for it is He that shall save His people from their sins." Matth. 1:21.

There are many motives which may induce religious teachers to lower the stand-

ard of saving faith and thereby to promote imperfect religious experience and superficial conversions. Sometimes it is because the way seems so hard, and they want to find an easier one, forgetting that it is a narrow gate and a narrow way through which we *must* pass to eternal life, and that the broad way, which is easy to the flesh, leads most certainly to eternal ruin. Sometimes they feel that men are so averse to self-denial as to render it almost hopeless to press it upon them, and so they try to modify the conditions of acceptance and forgiveness in order that they may persuade them to believe and be saved. Thus they forget that the Master made no concealment of the exact character of the way unto life, although he knew full well that "few there be that find it." Sometimes it seems so important for the interests of the church, and especially of their branch of it, that great numbers, particularly the rich, the talented and the influential, should be brought into it, that religious teachers are not satisfied when they have opened

the gate to its full width, but they cut away one of its posts and enlarge the entrance. Sometimes personal ambition or the desire of preferment prompts the struggle after eminence and distinction, not by a lowly service of love, but by a brilliant array of converts numbered with mathematical precision and heralded in the religious periodicals in such terms as glorify the creature more than the Creator. No wonder that so many apparent conversions are so superficial that the real status of the soul is very little changed.

It is a satisfaction, however, to believe that there is a growing conviction amongst Christians that greater care ought to be exercised to secure thorough work at the beginning—to lay broad and deep foundations, so that “Zion may be redeemed with judgment and her courts with righteousness.” Isaiah 1:21. The corn and the wine of the promised land are not for the rebellious, but for the willing and obedient. A sinner, even when wretched, under deep conviction for sin, does not need comfort

until he is truly repentant. To beguile him into a false rest, in no way betters his condition. An eminent evangelist is reported to have recently said that "He would rather let a mourner stay on his knees until judgment day, than to put a single earthly prop under his soul," and furthermore, that he would leave the mourner with the Spirit who had convinced him of his sin, and he would lead him to Christ. This may seem to be strong language, but it is refreshing and healthful in contrast with the busy activity (shall we not say, intermeddling?) sometimes manifested by revivalists. Indeed, if the principle embodied in these pithy expressions were carried out in revival meetings, there would not be so much work that has to be done over again. A disregard of this principle causes *the doing over again* to absorb almost the whole effort of subsequent laborers, so that there is very little headway.

If a church is strong it must be because it has strong members, and no man can be strong in Christ Jesus if he is strong in

his own unrenewed will. Until that will is renewed there is no new birth. He who does not, according to the strength given him, surrender all to God, is not a new creature. He cannot be at peace with God. "*Repent ye and be converted*, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3:19. Sound teaching herein is vital. Let the *necessity* of sanctification be inseparably connected with the *privilege* of justification in the regeneration of souls. Then men cannot deceive themselves with the belief that they are converted, until they have surrendered their will to God. Until this is done, the forgiveness of past sins, even if they could attain it, would not save them, for a life of sin must needs be their portion until they are transformed by the renewing of their minds.

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